

LEADER: SUGGESTIONS & THOUGHTS AS YOU LEAD...!

5 thoughts on leading your group

1. PRAY for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God's wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God's instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to having a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. **Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.**
2. PLAN where you want to take your group in the next 60-90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Challenge members to look for new ways for them to CONNECT and/or take NEXT STEPS toward growing in their relationship with Jesus Christ. Remember, your role will be most impactful if you focus on simply being an **ENCOURAGER**.
3. PONDER YOUR PROGRESS after each meeting and at the end of a semester. Reflect on what went well and what did not. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?
4. PREVIEW the weekly GG questions, understanding that they are simply a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. As the GG leader, you should examine and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson. Again, it is just a guide for you!
5. PROMOTE ACCOUNTABILITY: Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately, you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments as we all grow in our relationships with Jesus Christ. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.

Heaven | Part 3

May 17, 2020

QUESTIONS

- What is one idea from the message that really stood out to you?
 - Why did this idea grab your attention?
- When you think of Heaven, what do you envision?
 - What do you think it will look like?
 - What will people look like?
- The word “Heaven” appears 492 times and the word “Heavens” appears 203 times.
 - Why do you think that is so?
- Jesus, Himself, spoke of Heaven 132 times. He came from Heaven to earth; explain how His Words are more powerful than anyone else’s on the subject of Heaven.
- Read Matthew 6:9-12
 - When Jesus taught this prayer to the disciples, what do you think He was trying to impress upon them?
- Read John 14:2-3
 - What are some of the ‘everyday’ words Jesus uses to describe Heaven?
 - Why do you believe He communicated the message that way?
- Commonly, throughout the Bible, the Hebrew word for ‘Heavens’ is plural and refers to the sky. ‘Heaven,’ which is singular, refers to God’s Dwelling Place.
 - Read Psalm 57:9-11, Deuteronomy 10:14 & Psalm 57:2-3.
 - Find the references to Heaven and discuss what they mean in each verse.
 - What are the major differences between the singular and the plural forms of Heaven?
- Do you know anyone who has experienced NDE (near-death experiences)?
 - The majority of non-Christian research has come to the conclusion that there is some type of ‘after-life.’
 - What are some of the common themes of most NDE? (see sermon notes on the app, if needed)
 - WARNING: Do not allow someone else’s experiences shape your understanding of God’s Word. SCRIPTURE MUST BE USED TO INTERPRET EXPERIENCES!
 - Discuss what that means to you and how you can be sure to implement that in discussions of NDE.
- Read Revelation 21:21
 - How many pearls for each gate?

- Had you thought of it that way before?
- Remember, it's not always about what will be Heaven for us, but also, what will not be present.
 - What are some things that will not be Heaven?
- Read Genesis 1:24-25
 - What occurred in these verses and what was God's final Words on the subject?
 - What is the difference between animals and pets as it relates to eternity?
 - Read Revelation 19:11
 - Do you believe there are animals in Heaven?
- Whether we see pearly gates, or streets of transparent gold, or even animals pale in comparison to the ability to look at the Face of Jesus!
 - Jesus refers to Heaven as Paradise and so does Paul. They use the same Greek word that means "a pleasure garden."
 - Besides describing a specific place, what else does the use of 'a pleasure garden' entail for us?

Remember each other, pray for each other...and as always...TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER!

***Bonus Questions for Teens**

1. What was one idea that stood out to you in the message?
2. Jesus talked about Heaven 132 times in the gospels. Knowing that Jesus came to Earth from Heaven, why are His words about Heaven so meaningful?
3. Read Matthew 6: 9-12.
 - a. Jesus taught this prayer to his disciples. Why do you think Jesus wanted His disciples and us to pray this prayer?
 - b. What parts of the prayer could you start imitating in your prayers?
4. Do you think there will be animals in Heaven?
 - a. Read Genesis 19:11
 - b. What does God say about animals in Heaven?
5. The Greek translation of the word "Heaven" is "pleasure garden."
 - a. Name a place on Earth that you consider paradise.
 - b. When you hear "pleasure garden," what do you picture in your mind? A place, a person, activities, etc.